

Address of Senator Richard M. Nixon,
Commodore Hotel, New York, N.Y.,
Sunday Afternoon, October 19, 1952.

SENATOR NIXON: Thank you very much, Attorney-General Goldstein, for a very generous introduction to this fine meeting on Sunday afternoon in New York City. I want you to know that it is a very heart-warming thing to find a gathering of citizens together at this time to give me an opportunity to get acquainted with you and to discuss one of the basic issues of this campaign.

Let me say that as we enter the final weeks of the campaign, we usually find that the issues become somewhat crystallized. I think that in American political campaigns we all have come to expect that they will be tough, that they will be hard hitting, that we will have the candidates on both sides expressing their views more and more vigorously, shall we say, as the campaign goes along. And this one has been no exception, let me say.

But I also feel that in American political campaigns we recognize that there are some matters which are issues which should be discussed honestly and directly so that the American people can make the intelligent choice that must be made for the good of the country, and other issues which are above partisan politics, on which all Americans, Democrats and Republicans, should have no disagreement whatever. And the one that I want to discuss today is one of those issues.

In other words, I say that where we are confronted with a problem which goes right to the root of America's greatness, then it is essential that Democrats and Republicans alike not make a political football out of that problem. And I think that as we consider the problem

of civil rights that we will certainly all of us put that issue in that category.

Have you ever stopped to think, for example, why America is a great country? Just think of our history, what a great history it is. It was about 170 years ago only that we were 13 colonies with about three million people on the Atlantic Seaboard, and all of the great political figures of the times said, "This is a nation that will never last because it doesn't have a strong enough central government." But the nation began to grow. It grew and the people crossed the Alleghenies and settled the territory to the Mississippi, and then from the Mississippi to the Rockies, and then clear over to my home state of California, until finally today we find just 170 years later the United States has a hundred and sixty million people, it is the most productive nation in the world economically, it is one of the two most powerful nations in the world militarily.

Now, why is America a great nation? What is the source of our greatness? I think as we consider it we can, of course, get a number of answers. There are some who will say, "Well, the reason that America is a great nation is because we have had great natural resources." But that is not the really great reason, because other nations have had great resources and they have not progressed as we have.

And others will say, "Well, the reason that America is a great nation and has had a great history is because we are a great people." But who are the people who made America? This was no master race. The people that made America came from all of the nations of the

world. They came from Europe, they came from Asia, they brought their varying cultures and in those cultures and among those peoples and from them we developed, I think, the greatest people that the world has today.

And I think one of the reasons for the great source of our greatness as a nation is that from the time of our foundation we have recognized the rights of men and women as individuals, to make their own contributions to the nation's productivity.

Now, let me get to the gist of the question which is before us today in the closing weeks of this campaign, the question of civil rights. I think that we should all recognize that anything which would destroy this source of our greatness, this source of our greatness which we see has been responsible for our progress in the past, anything that would impair it, is un-American in the very deepest sense of the word.

And I think that it is essential that candidates for public office exercise proper restraint in discussing this issue of civil rights, proper restraint so that we do not raise the ugly specter of race hatred and religious hatred in an American political campaign.

I think that we have seen during the past few days an indication that there are some who have not respected that restraint which anybody in public life should show on an issue of this type. And I think that as far as the American people are concerned, they are going to show their resentment at the polls of the fact that a man who is not running for the Presidency of the United States, but one

who is attempting to indicate to the American people who should be elected President of the United States, has attempted to inject a false issue into this campaign. I say a false issue, because anyone who would suggest that Dwight Eisenhower, the man who mounted the pre-offensive which destroyed the Nazis in World War II, anyone who would suggest that he was a protagonist of the master race theory, I say is engaging in the lowest type of gutter politics.

I would suggest further that the candidate opposing Dwight Eisenhower for the Presidency of the United States should, if he really believes in racial tolerance, if he really believes in civil rights, that he should immediately disassociate himself from this in-temperate and unfair and vicious attack.

And now, may I discuss the problem of civil rights as I think it should be discussed at this stage in the campaign, objectively and sanely. First, what are the threats to the civil rights of Americans at the present time? They come from the right and they come from the left. And I would say that those who threaten civil rights from the right are just as great a danger and are just as un-American as those who threaten them from the left.

I refer, for example, to people of the Gerald L. K. Smith variety, the Joseph P. Kamp, and Gerald Winrod. And you say, "How can we deal with these people?" And my answer is, first of all, that any candidate for public office who gets their support should immediately repudiate it, and second, we must use political action whenever political action is possible to defeat the candidates who refuse to repudiate that support.

Let me say that one of the things that I am proudest of in my political life is that just this spring I supported a young Marine veteran who defeated for the Republican nomination to Congress of the United States State Senator Jack Tenney who had refused to repudiate the support of Gerald L. K. Smith.

That is one way, in other words to deal with this problem, deal with it on a political basis and not allow any time that support to be accepted, either tacitly or openly.

A second problem that we have in the field of civil rights is the field of immigration law. Now, I know that we are discussing here a very technical matter; it is a very controversial matter. I am referring, of course, to the McCarran Act. I noted the statement that was made by our candidate for the Presidency Dwight Eisenhower on that Act.

Let me say this, that as one of those who voted for the Act, that it was a bill which codified existing law, which made some improvement in the existing law in that it removed the discrimination which existed against Orientals, but a bill which had inequities in it which additional amendments would have to be made in order to remove. And I am proud to see, incidentally, that our candidate for the Presidency of the United States has made this statement to which I subscribe 100%: "A better law must be written that will strike an intelligent, unbigoted balance between the welfare of America and the prayerful hopes of the unhappy and the oppressed."

I think an indication of the problem is the fact that we have at the present time a requirement by the State Department in the visa division, a requirement that those applying for visas indicate their religion. The Act, in my opinion, does not require that. I think the State Department is making that requirement for political purposes, but in

any event the act must be amended to make sure that no such requirement exists in the law under any circumstances whatever.

And now may I turn to one other problem. I mentioned the danger on the Right. There is also a danger on the left. I don't have to discuss it, incidentally--the danger of the Communist threat on the left--but all that I can say is this: we must recognize that in dealing with Communism we must not adopt the same means that the Communists use. Because when you adopt the means, the means sometimes become the end. That is why I have always supported in the Congress of the United States fairer rules of procedure for witnesses before Congressional Committees...the right to counsel, the right to make a statement in their own behalf, the right to present witnesses who will testify in their own behalf...because, remember, that in dealing with Communism in the United States, our aim should always be this: Protect the innocent, but convict the guilty.

Finally, some of you are going to say, what kind of a program, as far as legislation is concerned, can we develop, Senator, in the field of civil rights? And my answer is that the great difficulty in the past is that we have had promises but no performance.

Why? Because all the promises in the world do not mean anything unless we have bills which can pass the Senate of the United States; and bills cannot pass the Senate of the United States as long as the filibuster exists in the Senate. And I think that we can recognize that Dwight Eisenhower can keep his promises, because he is going to have a Vice President who opposes the filibuster, and you can be sure that once Dwight Eisenhower becomes President of the United States we are going to have performance on civil rights, not just promises.

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